

Pam

Shen

1836

Nat. Comm.

Drawn from Real Life



JOYCE SHEN

Katharine R. Green

To become acquainted with Joyce Shen, one should first know her mother, "Grandma" Sio. During her long life, the spiritual influence of Grandma Sio was widely and deeply felt and that influence still lives on. Mrs. Sio brought up her children with beautiful ideals of Christian service

and her daughter, Mrs. Shen, is her worthy successor.

In 1903, the year of the Rabbit, Baby Joyce was born on the windswept island of Golden Gate (Amoy) where her father was a preacher. The strongest influence in her young life was, however, not that of her father but of her devoted mother. From their babyhood, Mrs. Sio's children were nurtured and loved into a Christian way of life.

When Joyce was eight years old, she entered the Girls' Primary School on Kulangsu, after which she attended the Amoy Girls' Middle (high) School. In 1922 she was one of the first class of students to be graduated from this middle school.

During these years, the Sio family was living on Kulangsu. Every evening when the children gathered around the family altar, four schools were represented. After the reading of the Bible, each child took part in the worship service. From those studying in the middle school to the little tots still in kindergarten, each reported on what had been said that morning at the school chapel service.

After her graduation from middle school, Joyce Sio taught for two years before going on to college. Being a conscientious student and anxious to make the most of her opportunities, she overdid in her freshman year and was forced to take a rest. The next year, however, she returned to Ginling College in Nanking where she repeated her freshman work.

Her college "major" was Chinese literature with a second major in comparative religions and religious psychology. These studies were of inestimable value to Joyce later on when she herself became a middle school teacher. She was so much better equipped to discuss with her young friends the problems that were troubling them.

In the second term of her sophomore year, Joyce Sio's studies were again interrupted. In 1927 the Southern Army invaded Nanking and Ginling College was forced temporarily to close its doors. But Joyce was not one to give up lightly her plans for a good education. When the college reopened she returned to Ginling and in 1930 received her diploma. For three years after that Joyce taught Chinese literature and English in the Amoy Girls' Middle School. At that time her mother was acting as house mother in the dormitory making it possible for mother and daughter to be closely united again.

In 1934 Joyce was married to Mr. S. G. Shen, the principal of the Anglo-Chinese College of Kulangsu. For half a year after she became a bride, Mrs. Shen remained at home. But at the beginning of the following term while still living on the campus of the Anglo-Chinese College, she again taught in the Middle School. Later on she became a teacher in her husband's college where she was in charge of religious education. The college at that time had an enrollment of about four hundred boys and young men. Joyce Shen became

their loyal and helpful friend. Her students got into the habit of dropping into the pleasant Shen home for personal talks and to discuss their problems.

Their first child was born in 1935, a daughter whom they named To-hiong, "Fragrance of the Gospel." Four years later To-hui, a little son, was born. His name means "Seal of the Gospel." In six more years To-sim, "Heart of the Gospel" was born.

After 1941 there were changes in the Shen family. Under the Japanese rule the schools on Kulangsu were reopened but all leaders in educational circles had to walk carefully in order to avoid offending the usurpers. All religious teaching was forbidden in the schools, so Joyce Shen became an assistant to the pastor of Trinity Church. For two years she worked in cooperation with Pastor Law in conducting the church services.

Trinity Church held special services for students every Sunday morning at eight fifteen to make up for this lack of instruction in the schools. Her long experience as a teacher and as a religious adviser to students particularly fitted Mrs. Shen to conduct this service. Each Sunday, too, she preached either the morning or the afternoon sermon at the regular church service. Besides this, before the opening of the Sunday school at two P.M., she conducted a half hour service for new hearers of the Word.

During these months and years when the Chinese were facing such devastating war conditions, many of the church members volunteered for personal witnessing to the power and value of the Gospel message. Each Tuesday afternoon at about four, these voluntary workers gathered at Trinity Church for Bible study and prayer, after which they reported on their experiences. Mrs. Shen and Pastor Law divided responsibility for the leadership of this group.

In 1945 Mr. Shen gave up teaching and became the preacher at Tek-chiu, the Second Church of Amoy. There Mrs. Shen is her husband's right hand and finds ample opportunity to witness for her Master. She takes charge of the church choir which is made up of about thirty young people. They have formed a fellowship which meets in the Shen parsonage every Monday evening. All wage earners, busily supporting their families, they find time to devote some of their energies to Christian service. At their fellowship meeting, after the hour of Bible study, they share their religious experiences and plan their programs of service. Mrs. Shen is much encouraged by the steady growth in Christian living among these young people and is herself an inspiration to them.

To-hiong, the eldest of the Shen children, is now a student in the middle school. Though the expenses are heavy, God has provided each term the funds needed.

To-hui, the young son though only ten years old is a proficient reader of the Chinese character Bible. He declares that he wishes when he becomes a man to be a pastor.

Little To-sim, the youngest child, is still a baby. She is a sweet little girl and the darling of the family. Through these three lovely children the beautiful spirit of Grandma Sio still lives on. They will walk worthily in her blessed footsteps.

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

156 Fifth Avenue

New York 10, N. Y.